**July 31, 2020**

**BIBLE STUDY**

**Straightway Church of Christ, Inc.**

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**LESS IS MORE**

**(You Have Too Much To Have Faith In God)**

**Judges 7:1-25**

***Judges 7:1 "Then Jerubbaal, who [is] Gideon, and all the people that [were] with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley."***

God sees Gideon as a mighty warrior against evil. That is why he is spoken of as Jerubbaal here. Gideon’s forces were assembled at the foot of Mount Gilboa. There are thousands of Israelites with Gideon at this point. Remember from the last chapter that the Midianites had gathered about five miles northwest across the valley of Jezreel by the hill of Moreh.

***Judges 7:2 "And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that [are] with thee [are] too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me."***

God did not want the Israelites to think they could win the war with their own strength. He wanted them to know, that it was by His power the Midianites would be destroyed. He was trying to teach them to trust Him. This whole activity is to turn their hearts back to God and away from the false gods.

***Judges 7:3 "Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever [is] fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand."***

Those who follow God must have faith. The opposite of fear is faith. There were 32,000 Israelites who had followed Gideon to this place. God wanted Gideon to know that everyone with him didn’t have the same measure of faith, or enough faith for the impending battle.

***Romans 12:3***

***3For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.***

***2 Corinthians 10:15***

***15Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly,***

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Gideon’s divine mobilization strategy had both scriptural precedent and a practical principle: (1) The fears of some can influence the faith of others. (2) The practical leadership wisdom to be alert to the battle conditions and the faith of those with you must take precedence over the gratification of personal needs.

***Deuteronomy 20:1-12***

***1 When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.***

***2And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people,***

***3And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them;***

***4For the Lord your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.***

***5And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it.***

***6And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it.***

***7And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her.***

***8And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart.***

***9And it shall be, when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people.***

***10When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it.***

***11And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee.***

***12And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it:***

These Israelites are like people who proclaim Christianity. There are a multitude who profess Christianity {spiritual Israelites}, but in times of spiritual warfare, too often many believers lack sufficient faith and would turn and leave at the first problem that comes along. There were only 10,000 left who were not afraid. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

***Hebrews 11:6***

***6But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.***

***Romans 10:17***

***17So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.***

***Judges 7:4 "And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people [are] yet [too] many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, [that] of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go."***

It is not Gideon who is separating them out, it is the LORD. The Lord will choose His army. God chooses from the multitude of those proclaiming belief, as well. The next test is to see if they will lay their weapons {Bibles} down.

***Judges 7:5 "So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink."***

We see that those who lapped like a dog, did not lay their weapons down to drink. Their first thought was being ready to fight the good fight. Their own personal needs were not that important to them. A good soldier of the cross never lays his weapon {Bible} down.

***Judges 7:6 "And the number of them that lapped, [putting] their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water."***

This is saying, that only 300 of the original 32,000 were ready to go to war. Those who bowed down on their knees to drink, used both hands to drink. They were, also, not ready to instantly take up the fight.

***Judges 7:7 "And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the [other] people go every man unto his place."***

We know that the LORD told Gideon earlier that, the enemy would be like one man to fight, it would be so easy to defeat them. Everyone was sent home, except these 300 chosen men of the LORD. They were not chosen because of their great physical strength. They were chosen because of their readiness to do what had to be done.

***Judges 7:8 "So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all [the rest of] Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley."***

It appears, these 300 each had his provisions to take with him to battle. They might have received much of it from those who were sent home. It seems each man had a trumpet.

***Judges 7:9 "And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand."***

They are to descend to very near the camp and be ready to attack. This would be better to do at night, so they would not be seen.

***Judges 7:10 "But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host:" Judges 7:11 "And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that [were] in the host."***

God will allow them to go down quietly, and see, and hear what is going on in the enemy camp. God is doing this to encourage Gideon to go on.

***Judges 7:12 "And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels [were] without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude."***

This is speaking of an extremely large army of the Amalekites, Midianites, and the Children of the east. This is speaking of tens of thousands of soldiers. This will be one of the great battles in this valley.

***Judges 7:13 "And when Gideon was come, behold, [there was] a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along."***

A single man coming into camp would not have been noticed. He stops and overhears a dream one man is telling. Barley bread was eaten by the very poorest of people. The people eating the barley bread, obviously, are speaking of Gideon's army. It is obvious from this dream, that Gideon's army will destroy the army of the Midianites.

***Judges 7:14 "And his fellow answered and said, This [is] nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: [for] into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host."***

This dream was so obvious, that even the Midianite soldier knew exactly what it meant. I am sure that fear gripped these Midianites on hearing this dream. They are afraid of the God of Gideon. They know from past experience that they are already defeated, if God has given Midian into the hands of Gideon.

***Judges 7:15 "And it was [so], when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian."***

This dream and interpretation is a further encouragement from God that this is the will of God. God will be with Gideon and his 300 soldiers. He stops and thanks God, before going back to his own camp. Now, with his assurance even stronger, Gideon calls his men to alert.

***Judges 7:16 "And he divided the three hundred men [into] three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers."***

The pitchers were earthen-ware, so the heat of the torches would not destroy them. They could easily be broken at the right moment. This army is marching with very strange weapons. In one hand, they have a trumpet, and in the other, a pitcher with a lit torch. The torch is in the pitcher, so it cannot be seen, until the moment of the signal to break the pitchers. These 100's separated out was, so it would appear they were large companies of men.

***Judges 7:17 "And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be [that], as I do, so shall ye do."***

Gideon will give the signal. What the men see him doing is what they are to do. They are first going to ease up on the camp, undetected.

***Judges 7:18 "When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that [are] with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, [The sword] of the LORD, and of Gideon."***

These 300 men will come at the camp of the Midianites from 3 different sides at once. All of them will blow their trumpets at the signal of Gideon. They shall all shout, "The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon". Can you imagine waking to such a sound?

***Judges 7:19 "So Gideon, and the hundred men that [were] with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that [were] in their hands."***

The middle watch was just what it said. It was in the middle of the night, between 10 in the evening until 2 the next morning. To be awakened in the middle of the night with 300 trumpets blowing on three sides of you, and see 300 torches coming from three directions, would frighten you beyond reason.

***Judges 7:20 "And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow [withal]: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon."***

Each one of the hundred troops did the same. The shout of the sword of the LORD, and of Gideon must have rung through this valley, and seemed like thousands of voices. Notice, they came in the name of the LORD.

***Judges 7:21 "And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled."***

This was such a shock, they did not know what to do, so they ran the only direction there was not a fire. Their hearts failed them with fear.

***Judges 7:22 "And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, [and] to the border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath."***

They were so frightened, they fought everything that moved, and killed each other. Those who did not die here, fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abel-meholah. The more Gideon and his men blew their trumpets, the more frightened they became. The army of Gideon were not advancing on them, but they did not know that, and ran.

***Judges 7:23 "And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites."***

These are the 32,000 Gideon had sent home. Now, that the LORD is winning the war, they jump in to help. Their fear is gone. They are confident of victory. They want to be included in the victory. God had proven what He intended to.

***Judges 7:24 "And Gideon sent messengers throughout all mount Ephraim, saying, Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and took the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan."***

Gideon had not invited the tribe of Ephraim to get involved in the war at first. Now, he does. He gives them a specific task to do. Ephraim is to block the escape of Midian. They immediately joined in, and took the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan. They have, now, trapped the Midianites and their allies.

***Judges 7:25 "And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb; and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the winepress of Zeeb, and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan."***

"Oreb" means a raven. "Zeeb" means a wolf. It was the Ephraimites who captured them and slew them. The rock was named Oreb later, because that was where he was killed. The winepress was named Zeeb for the same reason. Zeeb was killed there. Ephraim took proof to Gideon of their killing Oreb and Zeeb. They brought him their heads.

**QUESTIONS**

1. Jerubbaal is the same as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Where did Gideon's army pitch its tents?
3. What does God see Gideon as?
4. What unusual thing does God tell Gideon, about the people who have come to fight?
5. Who did he send home?
6. How are they like the multitude of Christians?
7. How many people had offered to go to war?
8. How many were left, after the fearful went home?
9. How many lapped like a dog?
10. What did the 300 take in their hands to go to war?
11. Where did God send Gideon, to strengthen his faith in the outcome of the battle?
12. What did Gideon overhear?
13. What did one of the Midianites tell the others this dream meant?
14. How did Gideon divide his 300 men?
15. What was in the hands of each of the 300 fighters?
16. Why were the pitchers earthen?
17. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ would give the signal, and the men would do what?
18. What were all 300 men to say, after they blew the trumpet?
19. When did Gideon come near the camp to attack?
20. What did Gideon's army do, besides blow the trumpet?
21. Did Gideon's army really attack?
22. When the enemy saw the flames and heard the trumpets blowing, what did they do?
23. Where did the enemy flee to?
24. Who came to chase them and kill them with Gideon?
25. Who did Gideon ask to help, that was not part of the original army?
26. What happened to Oreb and Zeeb?